

NRCS **NEWS RELEASE**

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NRCS Extends Sign-up Period for Conservation Stewardship Program *Applications Will Be Accepted Through January 7, 2011*

St. Paul, October 7, 2010– Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief Dave White today announced the ranking period cut-off date for producer applications in NRCS's Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) has been extended to January 7, 2011.

“We’re extending the deadline for applications to CSP to provide agricultural producers more time to complete their applications,” said White. “This will help farmers, ranchers, and forestry producers by giving them more time and hopefully allow even more producers to participate in this program.”

CSP is offered in all 50 states, District of Columbia, and the Pacific and Caribbean areas through continuous sign-ups with announced cut-off dates for ranking periods. The program provides many conservation benefits including improvement of water and soil quality, wildlife habitat enhancement and adoption of conservation activities that address the effects of climate change.

All producers are encouraged to apply for CSP. The program, authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, offers payments to producers who maintain a high level of conservation on their land and who agree to adopt higher levels of stewardship. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland and non-industrial forestland.

A CSP self-screening checklist is available to help producers determine if CSP is suitable for their operation. The checklist highlights basic information about CSP eligibility requirements, contract obligations and potential payments. It is available from local NRCS offices or online at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html.

NRCS is celebrating 75 years helping people help the land in 2010. Since 1935, the NRCS conservation delivery system has advanced a unique partnership with state and local governments and private landowners delivering conservation based on specific, local conservation needs, while accommodating state and national interests. President Franklin Roosevelt created the Soil Conservation Service, now known as NRCS, in 1935 to help farmers and ranchers overcome the devastating effects of drought, especially in the Midwest and Northern Plains regions.

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